

From: bbarton@ashland.com@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 1:31pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern,

I do not think the Microsoft Settlement goes far enough to ensure that Microsoft's non-competative behavior will not be allowed to continue. Of the many problems I have with the settlement, I think the most important is the barrier to applications. It is not enough to stop at opening APIs for middleware. APIs must also be opened for applications.

While I am happy that the settlement makes an effort at keeping Microsoft from hindering the development of cross-platform middleware, it needs to ensure that there is a cost effective alternative to the Microsoft Windows operating system. By allowing Microsoft to keep its Windows APIs secret/undocumented, users who wish to use the vast majority of applications written for Intel-Compatible PCs will still be forced to use Windows. The reason that most applications are written for Windows is that there was no viable alternative; if most developers wanted to be able to make a profit selling their products, Windows is the only operating system that has an installed base large enough for the application to have enough possible customers.

The WINE project is an open-source, ongoing effort to create an environment that runs Windows applications under Linux, an open-source, free operating system. It is already possible to run many Windows applications using WINE, but not all and not perfectly. The progress is slow because much of the necessary code is under lock and key at Microsoft. Because WINE is open source, all work done to make Windows applications run in Linux also benefits other operating systems, particularly UNIX and UNIX-like operating systems.

Until Microsoft is forced to allow all developers access to its API and their full documentation, users who wish to use most applications written for Intel-compatible PCs will be forced to have a copy of Windows. Microsoft would rather keep this unfair advantage and not share the entire library of APIs, but be allowed to pick and choose. This is non-competative behavior. Microsoft can still be allowed to innovate with respect to the layout and functionality of its operating system without keeping other operating systems from running applications written for the Windows environment.

Respectfully,
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